

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 30, 2010

The Honorable John S. Pistole
Administrator
Transportation Security Administration
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
601 South 12th Street
Arlington, VA 20598

Dear Administrator Pistole:

First, we congratulate you on your new position and look forward to working with you to protect the traveling public.

As you are aware, more than 42,000 Transportation Security Officers (TSOs) work in airports across the country on the frontline in detecting and preventing terrorism. However, due to poor management practices implemented at the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) under the Bush Administration these workers suffer from high injury rates; high attrition; high rate of complaints filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; and low morale.

That is why we introduced H.R. 1881 to provide TSOs with standard government employment rights they deserve to ensure a professional, experienced screener workforce.

We agree with your statement that any change in policy cannot "adversely affect the safety and security of the traveling public." However, we strongly dispute the notion that providing standard government employment rights, including veterans preference, uniform pay, and other basic workplace protections, including whistleblowing, and collective bargaining, would hamper TSA's ability to protect the public or respond to threats. In fact, providing these rights will enhance security by increasing employee retention. The alternative, continuing to treat TSOs like replaceable parts, will force TSA to perpetually replace experienced and inexperienced staff, thereby leading to a continuous investment in training resulting in a wasting of taxpayer funds.

Frontline DHS and other personnel across the country already have these basic government rights, including collective bargaining rights, and having these rights has not diminished their ability to protect the nation. To name some of these entities, they are: DHS components, the Pentagon Force Protection Agency, Capitol Police, and the New York City Police Department. Certainly your experiences at the FBI must indicate that collective bargaining rights are not a hindrance to Mayor Bloomberg or Commissioner Kelly successfully protecting the people of New York.

We urge you to conduct your review of current policies swiftly and to strongly consider providing comprehensive workplace and employment rights to ensure TSOs make a career of helping to protect the flying public and our skies.

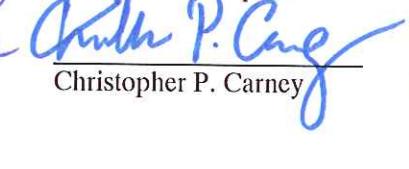
Sincerely,


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